**Session 15: How Districts can Promote Literacy**  
1. Discuss methods for providing time set aside for reading in all content areas.

*I am not a content area teacher, but I understand that they have a great deal of content to cover before it is time to take the state assessments. I imagine finding time to set aside for reading would be a challenge for most. The key, I believe, would be to weave the reading into the daily lesson plans. Let’s say, for example, the day’s lesson is to teach about pollination. Upon entering the room, students are given a relatively short passage related to the disappearance of bees. Students are required to read the passage silently and either respond to a short prompt or simply write down their thoughts for discussion. This could be followed by a quick discussion that leads you into the lesson for the day. This wouldn’t take a great deal of time, but the students would be reading content area text. Perhaps when giving notes on a particular topic, stop near the end and provide the students with just the main idea. Then, have them read the remainder of the text to fill in the supporting details. On days when students are testing, having some sort of reading activity waiting for the students to complete after the test. As long as the readings are meaningful, it does not have to take up a great deal of class time.*

2. List and discuss ways to develop students’ skills and strategies for reading complex texts.

*Students needed to be explicitly taught the skills and strategies for reading complex texts. First, they need modeling so they can see what kinds of things good readers actually do before, during, and after reading. Next, they need guided practice. A crucial part of the guided practice is accountability. Students need to know they will be called upon at any moment to share their own skill and strategy usage. I have found that if you do not ask them to do this they will fake it! Finally, they need a great deal of independent practice combined with teacher feedback. I tell my students learning to read is like learning a sport—there are skills and strategies that you can practice that can help you get very good at it.*  
  
3. Identify and describe the importance of providing diverse materials. .

*It is a diverse world. Upon graduation, some students will go to college while others will start a career. Those entering college will be faced with the most challenging and diverse coursework they have ever faced. They need to have strong literacy skills in order to be successful. If they will start a career, they will also have a diverse set of challenges: Job applications, insurance policies, employment contracts, employee policies, etc. Providing diverse materials sets our students up for success.*  
  
4. List and identify methods of using positive support to encourage students to continue being effective problem solvers, how to increase a student’s self-esteem, creating a more positive reading environment for both the teacher and students.

*I think creating a positive literate environment is the most important thing a teacher can do to support and encourage her students. During SSR time or journal time, the teacher should also be reading and writing. She should talk to her students about what she is reading and her thoughts and opinions on it. Her choice of material should vary so that students can see the value in fiction as well as nonfiction. Students should also be encouraged to share. The thought that reading and writing are treasured and valued activities in the classroom should be pervasive. Motivation and interest should be key factors when lesson planning. Get to know your students and what interests and excites them. Connect what they are learning to the real world. Vary activities so it’s not the same old thing every time. Be excited and encourage them to do the same. Pay close attention to the progress your students are making and let them know you’ve noticed. Essentially, create a community within your classroom that values literacy above all.*